

the recitals with which it was prefaced, there were statements and inferences, which we do not think will command the assent of the general public, but that it would be a good thing if a commission were appointed to inquire into the working of the Civil Service is a proposition that hardly admits of dispute. Several such commissions have sat in England and it would be an excellent thing if the Civil Service of every country in the world were subjected to a close and formal investigation periodically.

General BAKER, whose remarks on Monday could not have been in better taste, endeavoured to show that the Government was alive to its duty, and gave one instance in which he himself had recommended an amalgamation of offices. But while we have no doubt Mr. H. Excellency would speedily correct abuses that obtruded themselves on his notice, we suggest improvements that occurred to him. We think he would hardly claim to have conducted any searching and systematic investigation into the working of the Service with the view of ferreting out abuses and effecting economies. This is what is required, for we all know how apt things are to run on in the same groove long after the circumstances which may have made that groove at one time useful have changed. There ought to be no objection on the part of the Government to letting light in on the working of the Service. If no abuses or wastefulness are discovered so much the better, but if on the other hand it is found on investigation that economy can be effected or efficiency be promoted by making certain changes surely no one will deny that those changes ought to be made. Mr. WRIGHTMAN, however, in the recitals to his resolution and in his speech fell into the error of exaggeration. He might have spared us the unkind joke about the sad fate of the island of St. Thomas, which is surely entitled by this time to be ranked as "a chestnut." Passing this by, however, we come to the serious part of the matter. It does not necessarily follow that because new appointments are continually being made those appointments are unnecessary. It is not to be expected that a Colony with a population of two hundred and twenty thousand can be administered with the same staff or for the same cost as when its population was only half that number. Concurrently with the increase in the staff of the Government Service we have seen an increase in the staff of the Banks and the other commercial institutions. Turning to the Directory we see that whereas the staff of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank at the Hongkong branch numbered twenty in 1881, in 1891 it numbered thirty-four. Mr. WRIGHTMAN also adopted his usual lugubrious tone with regard to the financial outlook, on which point he was to some extent supported by the Hon. J. J. KSWICZ who says that our revenue is not glistering rather a vague term. It is true the Colony has been hit by the depression that has of late been experienced in almost every commercial centre in the world, but to our mind few places have a more cheerful outlook than Hongkong. With our geographical position and the largeness and as yet very imperfectly exploited markets by which we are surrounded, the trade of this Colony is bound to increase and there is nothing extravagant in the prediction that its population will within the next twenty-five years reach half a million.

No reasonable man can take stock of our conditions and fail to come to the conclusion that the place is bound to grow. It is important that we should not unduly discount the future and increase our expenditure beyond what is warranted by the natural growth of the Colony, but with an increasing trade and growing population we may be satisfied that the revenue will suffice to meet the legitimate demands made upon it. Mr. KSWICZ says the revenue is not elastic because we have not those numerous sources of income which are found elsewhere; but is should not be forgotten that this is only because we have not thought fit to tap those sources, and we hope they never will be tapped. If our aim were simply to secure elasticity of revenue we might resort to Custom duties, tonnage dues, income tax, and various other sources of revenue which are made use of in other places. Increased taxation, however, would strike more or less severely at the prosperity of the Colony, and it is therefore of importance that the cost of Government should be kept as low as is reasonably possible. But some expenditure of course there must be. Mr. KSWICZ, although he thinks the revenue is not elastic, fully recognises this fact and says he does not think a shrinkage is to be feared to that point at which our necessary expenditure will be in excess of our revenue. We do not think there will be any permanent shrinkage at all; fluctuations there may be and no doubt will be, but the general tendency must inevitably be towards expansion even without tapping new sources. If the Crown lands had been properly administered from the foundation of the Colony it would never have been necessary to levy a penny of taxation of any kind whatsoever. This, however, is another question, which it is unnecessary to enter upon now. In advocating the economical administration of the Civil Service we do so, not like Mr. WRIGHTMAN, because we think the Colony is on the road to ruin, but because we hold that the ratepayers, whether the Colony be profitable or otherwise, have a right to get full value for their money and because economical government is a principle to be supported on its own merits independent of fortuitous circumstances.

The *Wonging*, the Indo-China Co.'s new steamer, passed the Canal on her way to China last week.

The Agents (Messrs. Butterfield & Swire) inform us that the O. S. S. Co.'s steamer *Agamemnon* left Singapore on the afternoon of the 8th inst., and may be expected here on about the 12th inst.

The *N. O. Daily News* says—All foreigners in the employ of the Japanese Government, from the first, and the British, have received notice that their services will not be required after the 31st instant.

The Chinese man-of-war *Pienghuen*, which recently broke down and had to return to Keelung, arrived at Shanghai on the 1st inst. H.M.S. *Archer* also arrived on the 1st from the river, and the Russian man-of-war *Suwaui* was to leave Hankow the same day. The French gunboat *Pipere* returned to Shanghai on the 4th inst. From the River port.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

PENS FOR PLEASANT WRITING—The Pens of **Macniven & Cameron** are recommended by 2,347 Newspapers:—
They come as a boon and a blessing to men, The Pickwick, the Owl, and the Waverley Pen. Sold by all storekeepers. Beware of imitation. **MACNIVEN & CAMERON**, Edinburgh, Scotland

VESSELS PASSED ANIER.
Nov. 19, N. d. str. Voorwaerd, Van der Lee.
Sept. 30, from Amsterdam for Batavia.
20, British bark Kate F. Troop, Banks, Aug.
1, from New York for Hongkong.
20, Italian ship Estoriana, Kanny, Zerega.
Aug. 1, from New York for Batavia.
21, Nor. bark Løff, Baardson, Nov. 20, from
Batavia for Tjilatjap.
21, British str. Frinda, Readhead, Oct. 19,
from Batavia for Batavia.
22, German bark Carl Both, Voss, Nov. 5,
from Singapore for Macassar.
21, British ship Susanna, Thye, Nov. 2,
from Manila for Boston.
23, British bark L. A. Shaw, Nov. 14, from
Singapore for Fremantle, W. A.
23, N. d. str. Sakak, Sienkommer, Oct. 17, from
Rotterdam for Batavia.
24, British bark John L. Cronin, Gibson, Oct. 21,
from India for Halifax, N. S.
24, British bark Hudson, Curtis, Oct. 14, from
Manila for Macassar.
25, German bark Marie Berg, Hindrichs, Oct.
24, from Hongkong for Batavia.
25, N. d. str. Herpelt, Otto, Nov. 25, from
Batavia for Rotterdam.

THE WEATHER.

METEOROLOGICAL OBS. STATE.
7TH DECEMBER, A. D. 1871.

Barometer	30.13	30.18	30.09
Temperature	71	76	73
Humidity	74	56	63
Direction of wind	N.E.	N.E.	W.
Force	3	3	1
Weather	cy.	c.	c.
Rain	—	—	—

Highest open air temperature on the 7th 76
 Lowest open air temperature on the 7th 66
 W. DOEBECK.
 Hongkong Observatory, December 31, 1891.

Montana, British Columbia, Idaho and
Sutton, Palmer & Co.'s BIRMINGHAM
Sole Agents for it—
LANE, CRAWFORD & Co.,
Hongkong.

above on or about the 20th December.
 For Freight apply to
ARNHOLD, KARBERG & Co.,
 Agents.
 Hongkong, 28th November, 1891. 12898

For further information as to Passage and
freight, apply to the Agency of the Company,
c/o 72, Queen's Road Central.
J. E. VAN BUREN, Agent.
Hongkong, 26th November, 1931.

examined on the 12th instant, at 3 P.M.
 No. Fire Insurance has been effected.
SIMONSEN & Co.
 Agents.
 Hongkong, 5th December, 1891.

WMA KARSTADT, Amr. son, U. Hochert—
Blomson & Co.
LAWREN, Ger. str., J. Bruhn—Wieler & Co.
LAW, Brit. str., J. G. Ollfert—D. Sassoon,
Sons & Co.

